WHAT IS ENGLAND DOING?

By ALFRED NOYES

Cartoon by SEM OF PARIS

Probably no civilian has been given facilities for actually seeing Great Britain's great war work, for herself and her allies, equal to those put at the disposal of Mr. Noyes. In this article he sets at rest the doubts of those who ask whether Britain is doing her share. It is probably safe to say that more munitions of war of all kinds, from hand grenades to aeroplanes and from trench mortars to big guns, are produced in one week now than were produced in the whole first year of the war.

THIS is the question about the war which one hears more frequently than almost any other in America. Frequently it implies a criticism, and certainly till the last few months it implied a large measure of disappointment even among the warmest friends of England in the United States. The Germans have not missed the opportunity of encouraging the idea among Americans that in some mysterious way Great Britain has "lost prestige." They have been aided by the traditional British reticence, a reticence which nevertheless has its advantages; for when results are achieved in silence they are, in the end, doubly effective, effective in themselves and deadly to the talkers.

The silence of "those distant storm-beaten ships" of the British navy covers a multitude of results—definite, solid, epoch-making results, which are only dimly realized even to-day by the world at large. Strangely enough, it is because the work of the British fleet has been so complete and so all-efficient, because it has been able to do all that was required of it without exerting its full strength in battle, that these solid results have been overlooked by the multitude in neutral countries. The results of a blockade which extends from far north of the British Isles to far below the equator are manifesting themselves now daily. Not one ship of all the great lines of the enemy is able to show its nose at sea; while on every sea of the world the British ships are to be found, blockading, guarding, carrying; and there are no two ships that pass, by day or by night, but with some signal, some salute acknowledging that silent and brooding power. There is no better testimony, moreover, to the way in which that power has been exercised than the sense of quiet jubilation which runs through every such instance. It is to be seen on the faces of the passengers and crews—whenever such signal confirms their faith that the invisible ægis of Great Britain is over them, and the tragic exception has more than proved the rule. The tramp steamers running up the Union Jack and cheering as the Lusitania went by were undoubtedly, in the eyes of the whole world, on the side of the angels; and the Lusitania's medal, struck in Germany to commemorate the foulest act that ever stained the seas, has only marked the whole campaign of Germany with the devil's own seal, for all the centuries never to be effaced and never to be forgotten.

A recent visitor to America who was asked by the newspaper reporters, after their usual fashion, what had impressed him most in his first glimpse of New York, replied: "The spectacle of the German ships imprisoned in New York Harbor."

Those gigantic liners, of the Hamburg-American Line and the North German Lloyd, accompanied by a host of lesser brethren, are not so impressive outwardly as the great waterway of New York Harbor or the majestic skyline of the city; but in their huddled and crowded ranks, as they lie there, they are far more significant of what is happening in the world, and they tell of an unseen and vaster power, perhaps the greatest power in the world, that has driven them into this distant sanctuary. They look as if they had been driven in by a tremendous gale, never to emerge again, the gale of the sea power of England.

IN THE ENFORCED IDLENESS OF ITS SHIPS HAMBURG IS LIKE HOBOKEN.

They are significant, too, of what is happening in the German seaports from which they came. Liners like the Vaterland, luxurious palaces of the sea, deteriorating from day to day in their enforced idleness, are illustrations for the benefit of America of the deterioration and enforced idleness, the deserted wharves and ruined industry, of Hamburg and Bremen themselves. Two years ago they were engaged in the commercial conquest of the seas. There was no quarter of the world to which they were not sending, with a certain theatricality, be it said, these grandiose floating emissaries of the Kaiser, decorated with his portraits and busts in every cabin and saloon and companionway. The Germans were becoming the spoiled children of the world, largely owing to the generous privileges accorded to them in every seaport of the British Empire. The luxury of their largest ship—the Imperator—was beyond all precedent. Its Ritz-Carlton restaurant was more elaborate than those in New York or London. In every respect the ship was a monument of extravagance and spoke of a nation more than a little drunk with its own quick prosperity.

All this was changed almost instantaneously by the silent power of the British fleet. If it is to be asked what the British Empire is doing in the war, it would be almost enough to point to that frightened fleet in New York Harbor; for, whatever else may happen in the war, there is nothing more hopelessly remote than that any of those ships should show their noses upon the high seas until Germany capitulates Outside all the other rings of pressure that have been brought to bear upon Germany, this iron ring of sea power has closed in, silent and implacable and conclusive. In Hamburg and Bremen, to which the "world end steamers," with a tonnage of millions, two years ago were bringing annually a large share of the world's wealth, we hear to-day of food riots.

The accompanying illustration from a French journal shows at a glance what the sea power of England has enabled her to do in the eyes of one of her allies—how it has enabled her to create and transport the largest volunteer armies in the history of the world. Americans, facing all the problems of "preparedness" in their own country, are in a better position now to appreciate the sweep and splendor of this British effort than in the early days of the war, when neutral critics often wrote as if the only thing needful were that the forty-two millions of people in the British Isles, men, women and children, of all ages, should heroically "leap to arms before sunset" and Bryanesquely cut the throat of the Kaiser with a tuning fork, or demolish the Krupp works with a cocktail shaker.

If France, on the other hand, had been asked, in the early days of the war, what help she would expect from England, she would have replied in all probability: "The help of the British navy, and perhaps an expeditionary force of 150,000 men." It would hardly have occurred to any of the Allies that the greatest naval power should be asked to play the part of the greatest military power. But that was the implied expectation of many hasty minds in neutral countries. Nevertheless, behind the shield of the navy, in less than two years, the original six divisions of the British army (120,000 men) became over five millions (5,041,000) before the introduction of compulsory service. It may help Americans to realize the magnitude of this effort if one points out that the United States, in proportion to the population, would have to raise an army of about fourteen million men to compare with it.

Moreover, if one is asked for definite results at this particular stage and before this great new army has really got to work, one may point out that the movements of the Allies are on a far larger scale and of a far more comprehensive nature than those of the Central Powers; that therefore they are necessarily of the slower kind which we call "sure." They are "too great for haste"; and without falling into the grandiose manner of the Germans, one may say that though the sun and the moon may be more obvious bodies the movement of the stars beyond them is more important and will outlast them in the cosmic scheme. This astronomical illustration may lend a certain significance to the great slow movement which is taking place all over the world and to the fact that Britain has already taken part in campaign in Flanders, Kiaochau, New Guinea, Samoa, Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Soudan, Cameroons, Togoland, East Africa, Southwest Africa, Salonica, Aden, Persia and the Northwest Frontier of India. Already Great Britain has captured nearly seven hundred thousand square miles of German colonies; Togoland, Cameroons, Southwest Africa, Kiaochau, Pacific Islands and over a quarter of East Africa. Already, therefore, she holds a very solid asset against the territories captured by Germany in her first flamboyant rush.

But these larger things are not accomplished by the waving of an enchanter's wand. Gigantic organizations, of which the world hears little, have gradually shaped themselves in England. She has undertaken all the machinery of blockade and censorship on an unprecedented scale, and though this has drawn upon her the criticism of neutrals, it may fairly be said that considering the nature of the undertaking and its vast scope it has been worked with unprecedented efficiency. Here and there, by one detail or another, irritation has been caused, but to the disinterested spectator of the enormous whole—if such a spectator could be found—the abiding miracle is that it could be done at all. It has involved the creation of huge business staffs, by which, for the first time in history, a blockade has been carried on without overriding neutrals and, on the whole, through winning their confidence. No ship bound for Holland has been put into the prize court for five months, because things have been arranged beforehand, by agreement, as between gentlemen. No United States letter in transit is now detained beyond four days.

Moreover, the word "delay" which is so much used about the British censorship is often a very misleading one. At best it is merely a technical one in this particular matter; for the absurdly English but absolutely true facts are that, in many cases, *censored mails arrive at their destination more quickly than if they had been uncensored.* This is obviously so, for instance, in the case of mails taken at Falmouth from ships which intend to proceed by way of the North of Scotland; for the mails thus "delayed" are sent by rail across England and usually take the first boat on the other side, with a saving of five or six days on the war time schedule. If there be any complaint here it should be lodged against the German mines which have frightened neutral ships, not against the English censors.

Moreover, I wish that Americans could only see, as I have seen with my own eyes, the masses of contraband of all kinds which are posted as "letter mail" from the United States to Germany. Great packages bearing letter mail postage, but containing, in the aggregate, enough contraband to fill the Mauretania, come under the rejoicing hands and laughing faces of the immense army of workers in the censorship department. The queerest disguises and strongest vehicles are used. Packets leap from the toes of boots and shoes, and then packages are drawn from the lining of clothing. Much of it is curiously suggestive of the criminal courts. Indeed, the "cunning" displayed is all of a piece with other German characteristics in the war—the initiation of gas attacks, the fear of being poisoned, which German officers have displayed, and the actual use of disease germs in South Africa, all cunningly suggest the criminal rather than the knight in shining armor. Submarine and Zeppelin, too, even though we be forced to adopt them, are the felons, not the knights errant of modern war.

The only genuine American letter that has yet been really held up is probably the one which I saw displayed on the wall of the censorship museum; and, in any case, it could hardly have reached its destination. The authorities regarded it, however, with something like affection, and the envelope was distinctly the favorite decoration of that varied art gallery. It was addressed to

WILLIAM HOHENZOLLERN, Esq.,
Potsdam Palace,
Berlin.

If party is absent, please forward to St. Helena.

It combined a collection of the most vigorous cartoons of the Kaiser from several American newspapers of the Middle West.

In addition to the gigantic work of the censorship department, it may be said that British munition factories have increased from something inconsiderable to over four thousand.

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Wherever one goes in Great Britain to-day, from one end to the other, there is only one thought and one vast impulse. Britain at last is mobilized for war; the achievement to-day far surpasses the wildest German idea of "kolossal."

The British pre-war capacity for making munitions for land services was adapted to our army of 200,000 men. The French capacity was for an army of three to four millions. The number of workpeople now employed on British naval munitions approximately equals the total at work on French munitions for both military and naval services. We are supplying shell steel to France at the rate of half a million tons a year, other steel at hundreds of thousands of tons a year, coal at one and a half million tons a month. The consequences of the temporary loss of the French industrial districts thus fall largely on Great Britain.

The British output of heavy guns and howitzers for land service is now three to four times that of the French. The present monthly figure is 33 per cent in excess of the total available for the army in the field before the war. The British machine gun output is 20 per cent and the small arms ammunition output 50 per cent in excess of the French. In addition England has sent to France tens of thousands of tons of constituents of explosives.

It is the neutrals, not our allies, who frequently, without one solitary fact to go upon, ask naïvely: "What is England doing?" The silence in which the work has been accomplished was often necessary to its success, and it never deceived our allies. The offers of English help at Verdun were declined by Joffre for the very grim reasons which are now becoming apparent in the "great offensive," where the British in turn are grappling with the massed forces of Germany, while with poetic justice the French broke through. But neutrals clamored for head-lines, clamored for all the farreaching plans of the Allies to be destroyed in order to make a newspaper holiday. Rational folks, in even these countries, might well forgive the brusque declaration of a well known writer—"Damn all neutrals."

BRITISH MONEY AND BRITISH MUNITIONS MADE POSSIBLE THE RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that without the help of British finance and British munitions the great Russian offensive would never have taken place; for on this side alone an immense burden has been quietly shouldered by the British people. A heroic neutral—of the tuning fork type described above—once remarked to an Englishman: "How terrible for the British prestige that affair at Kut, that dreadful surrender of ten thousand men and a general!" "A mistake to send them there, you mean?" he asked. "Oh, no, not that!" was the reply, "*I meant that they could have died!*" The only additional pleasure that one could suggest to the hero would be that cinematograph operators should have been present to take pictures of the sublime holocaust. But the truth about the British conduct of the war, and of what is to come as well as what has been done, is to be found in that large and steady movement which will endure to the end.

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HIKING WITH HUGHES

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planned—planned by a slip of a girl from out of the University of Chicago. She had gone to work for the Hughes Alliance, and had done so well up in the Northwest that she had been sent down into Kansas and Missouri to work up a lagging Republican sentiment among the women there. The result of the work of Miss Ann Grimes was evident in the reception that was given the Candidate when he came to the trim, small city of Topeka.

A row of motor cars lined each curb of the broad street that led up to the Capitol. On the front of each car was affixed a giant painted sunflower, and in the cars sat women in white and carrying real sunflowers—perhaps a thousand women all told. They waved and cheered in unison. It was a pretty sight. Belasco could not have done it better than Miss Grimes did it. But it was more than real prettiness. It was genuine enthusiasm. The Candidate warmed to it. He gave Topeka one of his very best speeches—and I have heard him more than once.

It was in Topeka that I narrowly escaped arrest—ex-Governor Roscoe Stubbs and Senator Dolley and I being driven up the "Avenue" by as expert a *chauffeuse* as ever sat at the wheel of a big touring car. An irate traffic officer stopped us, nearly exploding in the importance of his dignity. Stubbs laughed at the policeman. There is something in Roscoe Stubbs's laugh that might even soften the heart of a traffic officer in a great, big city like New York or Chicago. The Topeka policeman melted, after a moment. And I escaped what would have been one of the supreme experiences of my life—sharing a cell in a Kansas jail with a former chief executive of that magnificent commonwealth.

After Topeka—Kansas City. Kansas City had not been loaned Miss Ann Grimes, but its welcome was none the less spontaneous. That evening the big convention hall was filled to the brim—and it was a hot and breathless night that was given Hughes there at the bend of the Missouri. But he held his audience. He was coming back toward the East—the land of his strength and greatest popularity.

So were the correspondents coming East. They were perking up—appreciably. One or two of them were actually smiling. They were at the typewriters in their little cubby-holes all the way from Topeka down into Kansas City, grinding out long stories. The representatives of the Established Telegraph Company and its Enterprising Rival were hanging over them in their efforts to get business. And down the narrow corridors of the train surged an indefinite mob—politicians, big and little, local newspaper men, mere curiosity seekers. Only in the railroaders' car was there peace and quiet.

"I suppose they'll can me for pulling that emergency," groaned the trainmaster.

It was B.; B., who in the cheerless hours of early morning had himself been inconsolable, who cheered him. The big reception at Topeka had not been lost on the aspirant for Congress.

"Let 'em fire you," he announced, grandly. "I'll have 'em put you on the Interstate Commerce Commission."

Some day we may progress to a point where we can elect a Candidate for the greatest office in the gift of our electorate without making a hippodrome of him. I hope to live long enough to see that day. For I have lived in the days when to elect a President it was necessary for a simon-pure patriot to don a dinky cap and a shoulder cape made of red oilcloth and to carry a blazing torch down the streets of his home town. They used to do that in the streets of Watertown, and father, who, among his other diversions, retailed kerosene, used to place water underneath the oil of the torches of the Rival Party. Father was something of a patriot himself.

We do move forward. The torches and the dinky caps and the silly little shoulder capes are all but forgotten. New England has learned how to have a political rally without serving free coffee and doughnuts. The saloon has ceased to be a factor in politics. Votes are not openly purchased and sold. We are approaching a system of balloting by which an independent and segregated voter may really register his will. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that a man big enough and capable and brave enough to be chosen as a candidate for our one great dignified executive will not have to be hauled across the country like a travelling circus or the poor dumb, helpless Liberty Bell.

Yet Hughes had no complaint to make. On the contrary, he was more than delighted with it, with the reception that was given everywhere, to his wife as well as to himself. It was the first time that Mrs. Hughes had ever been into the Far West, and she viewed its wonders with the admiration of a school girl. The Candidate's chief joy was in showing these marvels to her. Once, when they were looking at the Canadian exhibit in the exposition at San Diego, they became separated. Governor Hughes was surrounded by the local committee, Mrs. Hughes by its feminine counterpart. The Candidate espied an object of unusual interest in the exhibit. He turned to speak of it to his wife, then noticed for the first time that she was not beside him. The local committee pressed forward. Hughes detained them:

"Hold on!" he ordered, "I want my 'best ever' to see this with me."

The correspondents who rode with Hughes upon his Special had already ceased to believe the popular fallacy that the Candidate lacked the human qualities of warmth and affection. If they had not this one thing would have settled it for them—that he possessed both qualities—in generous measure. Hughes does not lack the human touch. Any of them will tell you that.